[Village of Mġarr]

By The mid-Thirties Mġarr had become independent of Mosta as a Police area and had been connected to the Telephone network[15]. Other amenities to reach the village about this time included a number of levelled roads, although asphalting did not appear until after the 1939-45 War. During the War years most construction activity was halted. Some 700 refugees from the blitzed harbour areas were billeted in the village; thirty shelters were dug, and about 600 bombs fell in the vicinity of the village destroying two houses and killing three people (R/291). United States' forces camped near Mġarr prior to the Sicily invasion: an Italian aircraft crashed not far away. Mġarr heard about the war and experienced as much of it at first hand as most other rural parts of the Islands lying well away from the Dockyard, air bases and other strategic targets. Food rationing and Government control of production put the farmers of Mġarr in as strong a position as elsewhere but at the worst period of the siege even they were reduced to chewing carob beans[12].

By the advent of the present decade Mġarr had acquired the normal characteristics of community life of village Malta, with Church, school, police station, dispensary and doctor, telephones, and roads. The built-up area has since expanded rapidly. In this present decade, too, the village has gone on to 'catch-up' with older settlements to the extent of establishing the four branches of the Catholic Action movement (Appendix 4). A most modern and well-appointed 'oratory' has for five years been the focal point of Catholic teaching and social work in the Parish. Its theatre holds 700 and shows films on Sundays and special occasions. More recently a commercial cinema has opened in the village but, one understands, it cannot detract from the popularity of the oratory film show.

Within the past few years, shops have appeared in the village which is now independent in this respect for food and general items. Travelling vans, a prominent feature of the countryside, further swell the range of goods available on the spot and are joined in this door to door service by the weekly paraffin (petrolju) vehicle. For other items Mġarr housewives still make the journey to Mosta or Valletta on the buses which operate every few hours; a generation ago their mothers carried bread on their backs each week from Mosta, the parent village.

On account of its recent development, Mġarr lacks certain features found in the larger and much older settlements. The Catholic Action is the only Lay Movement in the village - though it is notably active there, and of the Confraternities which are numerous in the older settlements Mġarr has only three (Appendix 4).